Fourth Grade | **Famous Kansans** | No. I-3

Overview

This lesson is designed to help students develop abilities in writing persuasive text. Students will read biography cards on several famous Kansans. They will select one of those people and write a persuasive nomination for that individual for inclusion in a Hall of Fame. This lesson is designed to take four days to complete, but can be adjusted according to student abilities. Suggestions for extended activities are also included.

Standards

History:
Benchmark 1, Indicator 1 The student researches the contributions made by notable Kansans in history.

Writing:
Benchmark 4, Indicator 3 The student uses details to support the author's position. (Ideas and Content: prewriting, drafting, revising: N,E,T,P)
Benchmark 4, Indicator 11 The student writes to convey opinion and to convince the reader to agree with the author. (Voice: prewriting, drafting, revising: N,E,T,P)

Objectives

Content:
• Students will be able to name two reasons why a Kansan is famous.

Skills:
• Students will practice the skills of writing persuasive text, including content, organization, voice, and word choice.

Essential Questions

• Why do we consider some people famous?
• How do we persuade people to see our point of view?

Activities

This activity uses the following *Read Kansas* cards:
- **William Allen White**
- **Blackbear Bosin**
- **Clyde Cessna**
- **Walter Chrysler**
- **Charles Curtis**
- **Amelia Earhart**
- **Georgia Neese Clark Gray**
- **Langston Hughes**
- **Hattie McDaniel**
- **Gordon Parks**
- **Susanna Madora Salter**
- **Laura Ingalls Wilder**

Day 1
1. Discuss "famous" and what it means. Explain to students that this lesson will pretend that there is a new "Hall of Fame" opening and nominations are being sought for famous Kansans to be included.
2. Have students read the **William Allen White** *Read Kansas* card as a class.
3. Create an overhead from the **Nominating Famous Kansans** graphic organizer and, as a class, complete it using information from the **William Allen White** *Read Kansas* card.
4. Brainstorm with the class what points a person might include when writing a persuasive nomination for William Allen White to the Hall of Fame.

Day 2
1. In some manner appropriate for your classroom, divide the class into eleven groups. Each group will be responsible for one famous Kansan. Have enough copies of the appropriate *Read Kansas* card so that each student within each group has his or her own card to read.
2. Within the group, have the students read their cards and use the **Nominating Famous Kansans** graphic organizer to guide their research. If there is time the students may also look for more information on their famous person in the library or on the internet. Have the group fill out one copy of the graphic organizer, but make copies for each student in the group or have students copy the information onto their own graphic organizers.
3. Have each group prepare a brief presentation for the class on its famous Kansan. If there is time, students may use illustrations, artifacts, or costumes to augment their presentations.

Day 3
1. Distribute a copy of the **Notes on Famous Kansans** worksheet to each student. (Students will need three copies of this worksheet in order to record notes about each of the 12 famous Kansans.)
2. Have the students present their famous Kansan to the class.
3. Students need to write down two important points about each famous Kansan from each presentation.

Day 4
1. Have each student complete a more formal assessment of the skills they are learning in the form of a written nomination of his or her famous Kansan to a "Hall of Fame." Students decide whom they want to nominate to a Hall of Fame. They should use their notes to complete the activity. This may be in the form of a letter or an essay, as appropriate for your classroom.
2. Distribute the **Nominating Famous Kansans Rubric** and review it with the students, discussing what makes a good persuasive argument.
3. Consider having the students review their work using the rubric and, if there is time, give students a chance to revise their nominations, if needed. Have each student turn in his/her nomination to you.

Extended Activities:
- Create a "Hall of Fame" in the hallway of your school and share the students' nominations with others.
- Create a timeline showing the birth and death dates of the famous Kansans and their important contributions. Compare these people's lives to other events taking place at those times.

Assessment

1. Evaluate the students' cooperative work to complete the **Nominating Famous Kansans** graphic organizer within the group.
2. Evaluate the students' ability to report back to the class about their famous person.
3. Evaluate the students' ability to write effective persuasive nominations.

Timeline information for extended activities:

William Allen White 1923-receives the Pulitzer Prize 1924-runs for governor 1952-William Allen White Children's Book Award is established
Blackbear Bosin 1940-begins work as an artist in the aircraft industry 1955-his painting *Prairie Fire* is published in *National Geographic* magazine 1974-creates *Keeper of the Plains* statue
Clyde Cessna 1924-with Beech and Stearman, forms Travel-Aire Manufacturing Company 1927-establishes Cessna Aircraft Company 1978-is inducted to the Aviation Hall of Fame
Walter Chrysler 1907-starts working for the railroad 1925-starts Chrysler Corporation 1930-designs and builds the Chrysler Building in New York
Charles Curtis 1885-enters politics 1898-the Curtis Act is passed 1928-becomes Vice President
Amelia Earhart 1928-flies as a passenger across the Atlantic Ocean 1932-flies alone across the Atlantic Ocean 1937-starts her flight around the world, disappears, and is presumed dead
Georgia Neese Clark Gray 1937-becomes president of her father's bank when he dies 1949-is appointed as U.S. Treasurer 1953-returns to Kansas to run the family businesses
Langston Hughes 1921-his work, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers,* is published in *Crisis* magazine 1930-publishes his novel, *Not Without Laughter* 1940-publishes his autobiography, *The Big Sea*
Hattie McDaniel 1939-wins the Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress for her role in *Gone With The Wind* 1947-begins her role as Beulah on the radio show 2006-postage stamp is released in her honor
Gordon Parks 1937-buys his first camera 1963-writes and publishes *The Learning Tree* 1989-writes music for and directs the ballet *Martin*
Susanna Madora Salter 1882-moves to Argonia 1885-joins the Woman's Christian Temperance Movement 1887-is elected mayor of Argonia
Laura Ingalls Wilder 1869-moves with her family to Kansas 1911-begins writing a column for a Missouri newspaper 1932-begins publishing the *Little House* book series

Notes on Famous Kansans

Kansan's Name:

1.

2.

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1.

2.

Kansan's Name:

1.

2.

Kansan's Name:

1.

2.

Nominating Famous Kansans

Who are you nominating?

Why:

Summary statement:

Name: _____

Famous Kansan Nomination Rubric

	Convincing	On the Fence	Not Convinced
Reasons for Nominating	I give 2 reasons that explain my nomination.	I give 1 reason that explains my nomination.	I give no reasons that explain my nomination
Word Choice	I use powerful words to make my argument.	My word choice works, but sometimes lacks passion.	My words are vague and used incorrectly (e.g., "He was a nice man." or "She did a lot.")
Voice	It sounds like I care about my nomination.	My tone is OK, but does not tell much about how I feel.	I don't show that I care about my nomination.
Convention	I use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.	I have some errors that distract the reader.	I have numerous errors and my paper is hard to read.
Meets the Deadline	I turned my nomination in on time.	---	My nomination missed the deadline.